1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa').

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

F 164 F 757

bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

E F 278 278 757

I WAS one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *mufattaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūḳḳa* or *uḳḳa*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¾ lb. Tr.]

E E [804]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the End of the World!

99.

*539 [551] Shamme is a girl's name.

Ya Šamme, ḥali, ya Šamme,
ya-msauwaḥani, ya Šamme,
ya-mgauwi'āni, ya Šamme,
ya-m'aṭṭašāni, ya Šamme,
ḥāli, ya Šamme!
Larūḥ eš-šām 'ala šān Šamme!

O Shamme, what has become of me, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest restlessly wander about, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest hunger, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest thirst, Shamme,
What has become of me, Shamme!
Verily, I would go to Syria for the sake of Shamme!

[804] 6. I would go to the end of the world for her sake! Syria is often used for a long distance. Compare No. 100.